

## **Dust Allergy**

By Heidi Hawkins, MAc, LAc

Dust allergy is quite common. Common-sense approaches to allergies usually involve avoidance of allergens; dust, however, is impossible to avoid. The presence of dust in our living environments can be reduced through good cleaning habits, air filters, removing one's shoes at the door to the outside, and other sensible methods.

However, reducing dust does not change the fundamental imbalances in the person who is allergic, and does not in any way constitute treatment.

### **What Is Dust?**

House dust is an unsavory conglomeration of dead skin particles; dead hair; fur and dander from pets and household pests, such as rodents; carcasses of dead insects; dust mites (and feces from these mites, as well as pets and pests); whatever we track into our homes on our shoes, clothes and hair; and what blows in from the outside, such as dead plant matter, pollution and pollens. To an extent, it is easy to ignore the contents of house dust, since the details are invisible to the naked eye. However, if we contemplate for a moment that house dust is filth and dead proteins, it becomes easier to understand why this is such a common allergen.

### **The LPF Connection and Standard Treatment**

As mentioned in previous articles, lingering pathogenic factors (LPFs) are primary causative factors for allergies from the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). LPFs, to be brief, are chronic lingering infections of any sort, anywhere in the body. These can include viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites (from the Western medical perspective), and wind, heat, dryness, dampness, coldness or warmth from the TCM perspective. TCM conceptualizes infections in terms of their nature, since TCM theory predates the discovery of viruses and bacteria.

Understanding the nature of the pathogen is usually enough information for the successful treatment of an acute infection in TCM, which explains how TCM is such an effective treatment for acute respiratory infections, regardless of whether they are viral or bacterial, and regardless of whether the pathogen has even been identified scientifically. Even a subclinical infection (an infection that cannot be measured or identified with conventional Western medical tests) can be treated with TCM. If you feel you have an infection, you are probably right, even if tests are negative.

Chronic infections are far more difficult to treat than acute infections. Once the pathogen has found a home in the body and settled in, it is unlikely to budge. Conventional approaches to TCM can treat LPFs if the practitioner is particularly skilled, but usually take a considerable amount of time and a great number of treatments. To take over a year of weekly acupuncture sessions is common, and even then, success is not guaranteed. Typical TCM treatment of allergies with acupuncture is usually palliative, because it treats the chronic infection the same as an acute one. Temporary results can improve symptoms and general balance of energies in the body. This is not the same as treating the root, the LPF.

The LPFs that cause dust allergy can be particularly stubborn, because the pathogens are often dead. To resolve a live pathogen can be difficult, but to get a dead one to move is considerably more difficult. Live pathogens can be encouraged to move on their own, but a dead one never will. Dead pathogens in the body are dead proteins, and are very similar in their makeup to house dust (filth and dead protein). Anything dead that sits in the body for a period of time is likely to decompose, just as it would outside the body. So similar are dead LPFs to house dust that the vast majority of dust allergies are caused by dead LPFs, from a TCM perspective.

### **Toxic Load**

Any toxic overload creates an aversion to that toxin. This is what an allergy does. Allergy is a logical response to aversion to an overload (toxic) situation. Allergies are not an unfortunate accident, but a practical response to a toxic situation. Allergies make perfect sense. What qualifies as toxic overload is a distinctly individual, unconscious choice. A more sensitive person will generally have a lower threshold for toxic situations of any sort. We consciously or unconsciously decide what we find tolerable, and our bodies respond accordingly. More sensitive people tend to have more (and more severe) allergies. Sensitive people also respond better to more gentle and subtle treatments. A body with an intolerable (toxic) level of dead LPFs will respond with an aversion to anything the body identifies as the same or similar, such as house

dust.

### **Successful Treatment**

Long-lasting success in the treatment of dust allergy requires resolving the chronic infections in the allergic person. Conventional approaches to TCM are useful to a point, but generally too slow or too superficial to be practical, and may cause severe acute illness when a chronic pathogen turns acute. Unconventional TCM approaches to treatment of LPFs include *tao fa wu* medical *qi gong* and new approaches to obscure Taoist and pre-Buddhist shamanic approaches that are all but unheard of in the West, and are silenced or lost in the East.

As TCM attempts to fit in to the conventional Western medical system, TCM practitioners often abandon and deny the esoteric roots of traditional Chinese medicine. Sometimes, this is inadvertent, such as with a TCM practitioner who is genuinely interested in this history and these approaches, but may not have sufficient information and training to do so. By revitalizing these traditions, there is once again hope for healing many modern (and increasingly common) ailments that do not respond well to conventional methods. An approach to healing that is at once subtle, gentle, refined and also extremely precise and accurate is our best hope for treating some of the most difficult and intractable of today's modern illnesses.

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